

Remarks/Arguments

This amendment is in response to the Office Action dated June 11, 2007.

Claims 1, 4-23 remain in this application.

Claims 1, 2, 4-9 have been provisionally rejected based on obviousness-type double patenting over co-pending application No. 10/110,325. In the event that the claims are allowed in either case, Applicants will file an appropriate terminal disclaimer, if needed, upon allowance of any of claims 1, 4-9 in this case. Applicants note claim 2 was canceled in the last response and therefore the rejection does not apply to it.

Claims 1, and 4-23 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(a) in view of US 2003/ Applicants disagree.

The present invention requires a thermoplastic composition be molded to the periphery of at least the filtrate screen layer and around a port. These layers are arranged with a plurality of other layers such as membrane layers and feed screen layers in a vertical stack which are then heated as one to selectively melt the thermoplastic formed in the filtrate layer and form the desired fluid flow paths.

The cited reference fails to teach each and every element of the present invention and as such is not anticipatory reference. In particular, the reference fails to teach or suggest the use of a thermoplastic that is formed in the periphery of the screen and a port which is melted to form the desired fluid flow paths through the structure.

The reference clearly teaches forming thermoplastic constructions (TPCs) on the edges of the screens and then selectively heating the adjacent tips of the TPCs together.

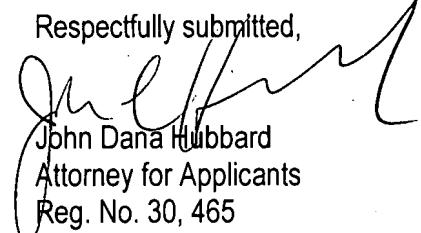
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That is quite unlike the present invention which forms a thermoplastic layer in an edge design and around a port to separate fluid flow as desired and then heats the thermoplastic to melt it and bond each spacer to adjacent membranes through out the structure to form an integrally sealed structure.

For the reasons stated above claims 1, 4-23 are not taught or suggested by the reference and are in condition for allowance over that reference.

Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and remarks.

Respectfully submitted,

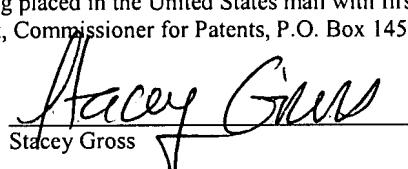


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The undersigned hereby certifies that this document is being placed in the United States mail with first-class postage attached, addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on November 2, 2007.



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